

*U.S. House of Representatives approves legislation to gradually increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour over the next three years*

**Washington, DC** - Nine years since last increasing the minimum wage, the U.S. House of Representatives last night passed a bill that will gradually raise the minimum wage to \$7.25 over the next three years. The measure, which also included a provision to eliminate the estate tax, also known as the "Death Tax," was supported by 12<sup>th</sup>

District Georgia Congressman John Barrow (D-Savannah).

"It's a shame that the House of Representatives took this long to vote on a minimum wage increase, but the way I see it, better late than never," Barrow said. "When we talk about raising the minimum wage, we're not talking about welfare and we're not talking about a handout.

We're talking about fair wages for millions of men and women who work for a living.

An increase is long overdue, and I'm proud to support fair wages for working families in any way I can."

A staunch supporter of increasing the minimum wage, Congressman Barrow has been the lead sponsor of a measure to force an up-or-down vote on increasing the minimum wage to

\$7.25 an hour over a two year period.

The minimum wage was first established in 1938, when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the *Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938* - setting the nation's minimum wage at \$0.25 an hour. Since then, the minimum wage has been raised 19 times to keep up with inflation, and is currently set at \$5.15 an hour.

The last increase signed into law was nine years ago - in 1997.

Since then, the purchasing power of the minimum wage has decreased by 17%.

In the history of the nation's minimum wage, the only time that the country went this long without increasing the minimum was from 1981 to 1990.

Current federal minimum wage exemptions for specified business and employees would remain in place, such as small businesses with revenues under \$500,000 a year, or workers on small farms. For a full list of exemptions, visit the U.S. Department of Labor's [website](#).

In addition to the minimum wage increase, Congress also voted last night to permanently eliminate the estate tax. Over the past year and a half, Congressman Barrow has voted repeatedly for efforts to both cut and eliminate the estate tax. Barrow has also supported efforts to make President Bush's tax cuts permanent.

"We didn't just pass an increase in the minimum wage last night, we cut taxes, too," Barrow said.

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